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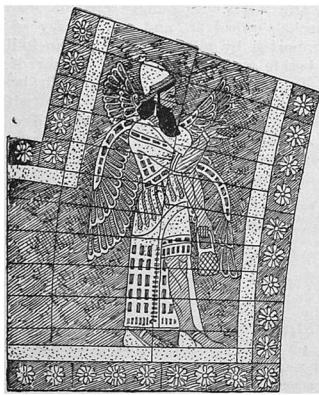


FIG. 8.

shaped, sometimes oblong, oftener flanged; in color they were of a rich red and bright yellow. The floor tiles were made in small cubes of various colors and were set in patterns.



FIG. 9.

With the fall of the Roman world, the art of tile making, like all other arts, passed under a cloud, but only for a while, for it was brought to life again by the Mohammedans in the East and the Monks in the West, to shine with greater splendor than ever before. In our next we will take up the history of this period of revival.



FIG. 10.

ROOMS AT THE HEALTH EXHIBITION.

VISITORS to that remarkable show, the Health Exhibition in London, missed a noteworthy feature of it if they failed to see, in a modest nook in that wilderness of halls and pavilions, a series of neat little chambers designed to exhibit the charms of wall hangings of cloth in place of paper. I am frank to allow that I consider the employment of cloth hangings in a city house a measure of doubtful advisability, since they might retain, not only dust from streets and evil odors from lack of ventilation, but germs of disease likewise.

It would be well if we could do away with carpets, substituting polished floors and rugs for purely sanitary reasons, and every housekeeper is aware that even lace curtains gather and hold a surprising quantity of dust. Our streets are so ill-kept that it is impossible to keep dust out of doors and windows. But despite these objections I confess to being more captivated by those pretty little rooms than by any that I saw in England.

They were so light, so bright, so cheery, so restful in their simple arrangement and color harmony, so dainty and refined that one might settle down in any one of them with the same natural enjoyment that a bee or butterfly might feel in taking his station in the heart of a rose or lily.

The breakfast room was furnished and decorated in white. Graceful little cabinets of white wood, chairs upholstered in white cretonne with delicate flower patterns, a round table set with white china, rugs on the well-waxed floor that had a little more white than usual in their composition, and walls and ceiling sheathed in linen with a pale figure printed on it, gave to this apartment an aspect of positive radiance. It wanted only a gentleman in gown and slippers, and a healthy-faced English girl in a soft white *négligé* dress at the table to make the scene idyllic.

A little winding glass-covered arcade opened from this room and formed a sort of greenhouse, containing rock work, a fountain and plants and flowers that exhaled a warm and fragrant summer breath into the breakfast room and set the caged bird a-singing in belief that he had been transplanted to a clime far distant from smoky London. This conservatory differed from the common run of such structures in being built irregularly so that as you stood at one end or its opposite you could not see through it. Little capes of rock work, first on one side, then on the other, emphasized the windings of the path and gave it more the impression of extent than if it had been a simple glass-topped corridor, like a hall, through which the eye could penetrate with perfect freedom. This plan of reserving something from immediate view, thereby piquing curiosity and interest, might be introduced with advantage into many other rooms than conservatories.

A room should no more reveal to the eye at a glance everything that it contains, than should a book or human character. The dining-room in blue, was appropriately upholstered and draped. Its chairs at the table were luxurious enough to increase the pleasures of a "square meal," and overhead the entire ceiling was upholstered in a material similar to that used as wall hangings and "gathered" by worsted balls. In the bedroom a neat and quiet style of furnishing had been chosen, and the appropriate oddity was here noticed of a water jug on the wash-stand patterned upon the prevalent figure in the wall paper.

JAPANESE WALL PAPER.

OF late years very considerable supplies of Japanese wall paper have been imported into this country, designed to come into competition with embossed decorated leather, the forms in relief being impressed by dies, whilst the coloring and varnishing are done by hand. Although the designs are not strictly imitative, possessing essentially Japanese characteristics, they exhibit many departures from the customary mode of treatment, in some instances in the greater elaboration of details. The surface of the coarse tough paper itself assimilates to that of leather, and where it is desired to render the ground absolutely smooth, lacquering comes in. This so-called leather paper is manufactured exclusively at the Imperial Factory of Yokohama, a Government concern. In this article the Japanese seek to turn their imitative faculties to account.

The native paper, previous to its production, was in small squares pieced together in covering the surface of the wall. The authorities of the factory secured some three years since the requisite machinery for making paper in rolls of a size suited to western markets, the appliances including for the imitation of leather work, enormous dies. The rolls come in sizes of twelve yards in length and one in width, each being equal to three English or French rolls. A varnish is applied to the colors and gold laid on, which is a secret preparation wholly transparent and having an all but imperceptible gloss. Besides protecting the colors and gold it is claimed that it renders the paper impervious to damp. The paints are of the enamel class, brilliant and sombre as required, and the paper has undoubtedly great durability. The variety of patterns displays the fecundity of the inventive faculty of the artists. Whilst in one piece cut flowers and stems are scattered at distant intervals on a field of gold or bronze, other pieces will show an apparently inextricable blending of devices such as plumage, butterflies gnarled trunks of trees, flowers, leaves, berries, fruit resting at times on what may be described as a middle ground of curiously involved lines, now in whirlpool eddies, and again like streams seeking an outlet. The tortoise is a favorite form from which radiates, as from a center, numerous fanciful devices. Some patterns are

suggestive of the lunar surface broken up with volcanoes, ridges, deep shadows, and undulating waves of light. There are patterns that repeat in various forms the native legend of a prince of one of the islands of the archipelago who rode on a tortoise to paradise, which the Japanese locate beneath the sea, to visit the queen of that domain from whom he receives a mystic gift, the tortoise being surrounded with aquatic plants and marine shells.

In one design for a ceiling in gold and lacquer the Mikado and five attendant handmaids are represented in separate circles, the additional ornament to folds of dress consisting of Japanese lettering. The chief attraction of this leather paper is the excellence of the colors, particularly purples, vermilions, blues, greens, and bronze, and their disposition with reference to general effect.

One background that caught our attention for its novelty, is of frosted gold, the frost unequally distributed; this involving most delicate manipulation and only visible at certain angles of light. Chrysanthemums and cherry blossoms are freely introduced, and there appears a strong preference for the hawthorn among plants. A design, somewhat unique, consists of covering the whole surface with the "eyes" of peacock's feathers, these partially overlapping each other like scales on a coat of mail.

Some of these patterns are of a sombre, subdued hue, but the majority are somewhat garish and gaudy, manifestly under the mistaken impression that these would prove the most acceptable to western taste. This Japanese paper will be chiefly used on rooms where a curious bizarre appearance is desired. Our own designs in embossed leather are not to be approached by Orientals in tasteful elegance. The fanciful Japanese combinations may, however, prove here and there, usefully suggestive to designers.

CHINESE METHOD OF BRONZING.

THE Chinese execute the art of bronzing in a very superior manner. Their method is as follows: After having rubbed the vase or other ornament with coal ashes and vinegar, they dry it in the sun and then coat it with a composition of which the following are the ingredients: Two parts of verdigris, two of cinnabar, two of sal ammoniac, two of the beak and liver of duck and two of pounded alum, moistened to the consistency of paste. When the article is thus prepared it is passed through the fire and washed when cold; again it is coated with the composition, again fired, and again washed, and so on for several times in succession.

It is decidedly curious that in a country where dogs and horses are at such a premium of popularity we have so few artists who paint them, and none who paint them with any approach to power. The animal painter has always been popular and prosperous in England, and animal painting has commanded some of the greatest talents of that nation. With us it seems the last work any artist dreams of cultivating, and one he works in with so little spirit when he does cultivate it, that we might fancy he was ashamed of his employment and followed it under protest.

SOME years ago our shops began to display excellent examples of popular Italian art in terra cotta or bisque. They were usually single figures, or at most, simple groups full of character and spirit. Their favor with us has, as usual, deprived their production till it is almost impossible to find one worth a place in any room in which the furnishings are not as vulgar as themselves. But they seem to sell yet, like a great many other objects whose old popularity gives them a fictitious value even when their intrinsic merit has disappeared.

THE rage for etchings has settled down, as might have been foreseen, into a steady and growing demand for the best work only. The day has passed when any scratched plate could be put upon the market and find a ready sale merely because it was an etching. The public now want pictures with subjects of interest, executed in the perfection of the art, and the artists and publishers are supplying the want with some of the noblest productions which modern times have given origin to.

